

WESTMORELAND GLASS COMPANY
(Specialty Glass Company)
(Westmoreland Specialty Glass Company)
Seventh and Kier streets
Grapeville
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-315

HAER
PA
65-GRAPV
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
WESTMORELAND GLASS COMPANY
(Specialty Glass Company)
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HAER
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68-GRAPV
1-

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Location: 7th and Keir streets, Grapeville,
Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1899

Present Owner: George Snyder

Present Use: vacant

Significance: Rare, intact example of one of the
largest specialty glass
manufacturing factories from the
late nineteenth century.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons

Project Information: In February, 1987, the Historic
American Engineering Record (HAER)
and the Historic American Buildings
Survey (HABS) began a multi-year
historical and architectural
documentation project in
southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried
out in conjunction with America's
Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP),
HAER undertook a comprehensive
inventory of Westmoreland County to
identify the region's surviving
historic engineering works and
industrial resources (Edward K.
Muller and Ronald G. Carlisle,
Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania:
An Inventory of Historic
Engineering and Industrial Sites.
Washington, DC: U.S. Department of
the Interior, 1994.) Archives for
HAER/AIHP projects are located at
the Indiana University of
Pennsylvania.

DESCRIPTION:

The Westmoreland Glass Company complex is situated on Brush Creek and adjacent to the mainline of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Grapeville. Hot Metal Shop: red brick, common bond with corrugated sheet metal covering sides and upper level; one-and-a-half stories with full basement; gable roof of sheet metal has monitor with casement windows; rubble stone foundation; two brick stacks with decorative brick dentil work. Interior: wood trusses and timber post and beam structural system in original building; steel Howe and steel frame structural system in addition; two sixteen-pot furnaces of common bond brick, one is original, one was rebuilt in 1950; furnaces supported by massive pilasters in basement; brick floors; glory holes for reheating glass; loft used for formers, fitters and snaps; original molds in the mold cleaning shop. Machinery: early H.L. Dixon Company lehrs. Machine Shop/Mold Shop: red brick, common bond; multipaned double-hung arched windows with triple brick voussiors; brick bearing walls with timber post and beam system; roof has timber rafters; pattern shop has many original patterns and an early milling machine. Mixing, Resorting, Warehouse, Packing, and Storage Buildings: three interconnected buildings facing the railroad tracks, one housed the kilns and lehrs, one an office and the last addition, a carpenter shop with original gift shop; red brick, common bond; one story with full basement; rubble stone foundation; brick bearing walls with timber post and beam structural system; brick vaults in basement; multipaned casement windows; original kilns from 1889 and pan lehrs from 1940. Decorating Room and Cooper Shop/Gift Shop: red brick, common bond; one story with full basement; multipane double-hung windows with double voussiors. Mold Storage, Packing, and Printing Buildings: four additions to the rear of original buildings ca. 1920s; red brick, stretcher bond; 1 story with full basement; Machinery: 1930s decorating lehr. Blower House: red brick, common bond; one story; two Sturtevant #8 Blowers.

HISTORY:

The Specialty Glass Company was organized about 1889 and was originally located at East Liverpool, Ohio. The plant made cream pitchers, goblets, tumblers, and glass novelties. In 1899 Specialty Glass Company moved to Grapeville because of the abundant natural gas supply there. The firm also acquired house-lots that it auctioned off to its employees, and glass workers were allowed to pay out their mortgages in monthly installments from their wages. After the West Brothers and Ira A. Brainard of Pittsburgh gained control of the company, the company's name was changed to the Westmoreland Speciality Glass

Company. The company produced condiments, such as vinegar, baking powder, and mustard, and glass items containing candy during the First World War. During its last thirty years the principal products of the Westmoreland Glass Company were milk glass reproductions. The company's chicken and animal covered dishes and other vessels of gleaming milk glass were produced until the factory closed. The factory employed 309 workers in 1916, 380 workers in 1919, 231 workers in 1931, 197 workers in 1935 and 133 workers in 1947. In 1982 the factory ceased production.

Sources:

History of Jeannette: Industries of Jeannette. Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor and Industry. 1916, 1919, 1931, 1935, 1941, and 1947 editions.

Innes, Lowell. Pittsburgh Glass 1791-1891 A History and Guide for Collectors. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

"Jeannette Pa. 50th Anniversary Issue," Daily News-Dispatch, May 2, 1938.

Papart, Emma. The Illustrated Guide to American Glass. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc. 1972.

Revi, A. C. American Pressed Glass and Figure Bottles. New York: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1973.

ADDENDUM TO
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